

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 240520Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0131

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9910

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, IN, IO

SUBJ: INDIAN PRESS ON US NAVAL TASK GROUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

1. THE CRUISE OF THE PACIFIC FOUR-SHIP TASK GROUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HAS THUS FAR DRAWN ONLY PERFUNCTORY NOTICE IN THE INDIAN PRESS. AN AP ITEM REPORTING THAT A US NAVAL SQUADRON WAS CRUISING THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE MONTHS WAS CARRIED BY A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS JULY 20 BUT NO EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS YET APPEARED TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.

2. COMMENT: THE ABSENCE OF ANY COMMENT TO DATE IN THE INDIAN PRESS IS PROBABLY RELATED TO THE CURRENT PREOCCUPATION WITH DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE RECENTLY-IMPOSED REGIME OF CENSORSHIP HAS PLAYED A DIRECT ROLE IN PREVENTING THE APPEARANCE OF SUCH ITEMS,
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ALTHOUGH WE HAVE LEARNED OF ONE DIRECTIVE REQUIRING THE

DELHI CENSORS TO EXPUNGE REFERENCES TO THE CIA IN REPORTS OF DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT. (WHEN WE ASKED DELHI CORRESPONDENT G.K. REDDY OF THE HINDU JULY 22 WHETHER THE GOI'S CENSORSHIP MIGHT BAR PRESS COMMENT ON THE NAVY'S CRUISE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY). HOWEVER IT IS CLEAR THAT CENSORSHIP HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF LOWERING BOTH THE PITCH AND THE NUMBER OF COMMENTARIES BY INDIAN JOURNALISTS ON INTERNATIONAL EVENTS BEARING ON INDIA. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER THIS PATTERN CONTINUES TO HOLD WHEN THE SCHEDULED PORT VISITS TO KARACHI AND COLOMBO TAKE PLACE.

SAXBE

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